Distr.: General
14 June 1999

English
Original: Arabic

THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Vienna
19-30 July 1999

Abstract of the national paper of Egypt

1. Egypt believes that outer space belongs to all peoples of the globe; that the benefits of space technology must reach out to all the world's population; and that the efforts of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat as well as the series of regional and international conferences, such as the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), are of great importance, bringing benefits for the peoples of the entire world. Egypt has taken part and will be taking part in all of the efforts related to making space technology and its applications and information concerning them available to the peoples of all States.

2. The present paper sums up the major issues Egypt focuses on in the field of outer space:

(a) Egypt is part of Africa and of the Middle East and it also belongs to the developing nations. Accordingly, and in that capacity, Egypt wishes to expand the scope of applications and the use of space technology in order to allow for the results achieved in the field of outer space and the benefits thereof to reach the least developed nations;

(b) Egypt is planning to implement an ambitious development programme aimed at bringing prosperity, and improved agriculture and housing to the people who live in the desert in the southern part of its territory. That programme would require large-scale expansion and development of agriculture and infrastructure in those remote areas and for that reason could benefit a great deal from space technology;

(c) Egypt has adopted a strategy entailing the development of its own scientific and technological potential as regards the space industry. Egypt believes in international space cooperation and that assisting developing nations to take their first steps in space technology could play an important role in enhancing the ability of those nations to make the benefits from advanced technology available to their respective peoples;

(d) Egypt therefore calls for the elimination or reduction of all the barriers and constraints that preclude the transfer of advanced space technology to interested States and for the provision of aid to those States to develop their space programmes for peaceful purposes, thereby making possible the expansion of the scope of uses of space technology in the service of mankind;

(e) Egypt has been and still is particularly interested in developing a precise definition of the divide between the atmosphere and outer space over the territory of each State—this being one of the points of international law that has challenged the international community since the beginning of the space era and concerning which no satisfactory conclusion has yet been reached—in a manner that would ensure the States' interests, sovereignty and security

and would not disrupt the freedom of outer space and the uses of outer space in the interest of humanity as a whole;

(f) Egypt has been endeavouring to strengthen its ties with the space-developed States and, to that end, has signed and is about to sign a number of international cooperation agreements in space technology and remote sensing;

(g) As regards remote sensing, during the year 2000 Egypt intends to establish a ground receiving station for satellite images. This will lead to enhanced capabilities in remote sensing and will also provide speedier and cheaper access to satellite images and their use for development purposes;

(h) In April 1998, Egypt launched its Nile SAT-1 satellite for direct television broadcasting and is currently preparing to launch its second satellite, Nile SAT-2. The two satellites are to cover Egypt, the Arab States and the Middle East, allowing for Egypt's cultural message to reach out to all parts of the world.